

AN Interior

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AN
INTERIOR
TOP 50

Issue 22

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Straight to the Top



By Aaron Seward

I picture you, dear reader, cocktail in hand, flipping through this, the Fall/Winter 2022 issue of *AN Interior*, for the first time. You're hanging out in one of the showrooms in our annual Design Showroom Crawl in Manhattan's NOMAD and Flatiron neighborhoods. The surroundings are chic, the crowd stylish, and the wares on display—fine furniture, sleek kitchens and bathrooms, bold tiles, and elegant floors—summarize what's trending in interiors.

More than generators of desire, these showrooms are extensions of the creative studio. They are destinations where architects arrive to handle the material stuff with which they'll bring their latest designs to life. And this publication—the magazine of interiors by architects—is the venue where all can see the most successful examples of their efforts, from beautiful spaces (check out the four stunning residential projects featured in this issue, beginning on p. 64) to a selection of furniture pieces realized

through collaborations between architects, designers, and manufacturers (p. 18).

There's no better way to honor the contributions of architects who realize the (interior) built environment than by recognizing the practices that are pushing the envelope of design. For the fifth year in a row, we share our annual Top 50 list (p. 34). A project from one of the featured firms appears above. Selected by *AN*'s editors, the list captures a diversity of firm sizes, reputations, demographics, and geographic locations, as well as scales and types of work completed. This year, we celebrate the Top 50 list with an illustration by German artist Christina Gransow. Commissioned by our stellar art direction team at Maiarelli Studio, Gransow's drawing depicts the creativity of these diverse architects who are all part of the same great project of imagining and realizing the many spaces that make our lives richer.



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This issue's cover spotlights a warehouse-like interior in Porto, Portugal's Freixo neighborhood. Designed by fala atelier, the project appears in the features section. *Photograph by Francisco Ascensão.*

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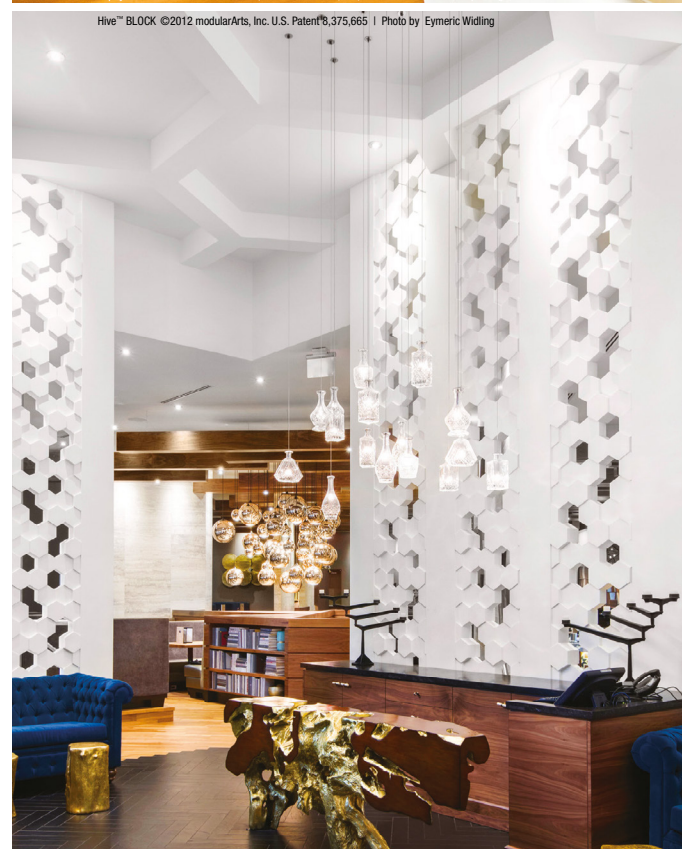
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In Practice

From Drawing to Building

Studio J. Jih and Figure join forces to realize a craft-intensive reimagination of a Boston townhouse.

Text by Jack Murphy

ABOVE The white oak staircase switchbacks through the center of the home.

FROM THE STREET, a row house built in 1892 in Boston's South End passes as stately but unassuming. Inside the 15-foot-wide, 4-story volume, another world emerges: The narrow home has been fully reconceived, reconstructed, and resurfaced from the bricks in. While the space is finished in rich materials and details—lime plaster walls, a travertine island, and a winding white oak staircase—its realization also offers important notes about coauthorship and creativity.

The project's client approached J. Jih, who leads the Boston-based Studio J. Jih, after seeing a sculpted roof deck they completed using Japanese joinery and no screws. The design "revealed a level of detail and consideration of the comforts and requirements of the body that appealed to him," Jih told *AN Interior*. They invited Figure, a San Francisco-based office led by James Leng and Jennifer Ly, to join as collaborators. The trio met in school at the Harvard GSD and had been looking for a chance to work together professionally.

To start, the most urgent issue was the staircase, which consumed the interior third of each floor. The team tested new configurations in which desirable rooms grew and secondary spaces shrunk; these larger rooms—the kitchen, living room, and bedroom—were then shifted to the rear of the plan. Here, the architects added new openings to this

James Leng



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south-facing facade, resulting in a grid of tall, divided windows that brighten the interior. Outside, new landscaping was provided by Pate Landscape Architecture.

The scheme left “the logic of the stair as this puzzle piece we were trying to determine,” Ly said. In response, the stair was “allowed to misbehave,” in Leng’s phrasing. (This deviance was useful, as it increased the residence’s usable area by 20 percent.) It now swoops and switchbacks, contoured by the space available plus the building code. These gymnastics supply its Shaker-like figure as it hairpins upward, a sensibility that’s heightened by the ribbed balustrade, which is left open or solid as needed. The chunk of circulation, which also conceals the angled flue of a ground-floor fireplace, lodges within a quadruple-height void, illuminated by a skylight.

While the architects resolved shared Rhino models to slivers of an inch, constructing the stair in real life was another story. Jih said the team generated an “exceptional level” of shop drawings to demonstrate that the sinuous piece was, in

fact, buildable. But the fabricator—Jonathan Michael, from Stairworks of Boston—only worked from hand drawings. Still, he was “incredible.” Michael produced 1:1 hand-drawn details of everything and then made mock-ups using cardboard tubes onto which he’d “draw the entire stair as it rolled around,” Jih recounted. From that template, one-story runs were shop-fabricated and installed on-site. When the design was converted between drawing mediums, the stair geometry changed due to the differences in tolerances. Jih said there was a “fascinating process of translation and a recalibration of [the team’s] understanding how to exert and cede control.” Rather than architectural drawings being treated as exacting instructions or, alternately, esoteric abstractions, lately they have become a site of dialogue or a surface of collaboration.

The stone island in the garden-level kitchen was another point of cocreation. Jih worked with masons in China—mostly through WeChat video calls—to shape a monolithic-seeming travertine object assembled from blocks. (It flares outward at its top to save space at its bottom and integrates a sink, oven,

BELOW The freestanding travertine island is the focal point of the kitchen. Lime plaster was applied directly to the existing brick, both for breathability and to maximize the interior’s width.



James Leng



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and dishwasher.) The pieces were craned into the backyard and rolled into place using logs. Additional moments of impressive stonework include the kitchen backsplash and surround, a freestanding powder bathroom sink, and the ribbed fireplace upstairs. Other refined touches include solid-edge millwork, pulls, and slightly expressed ceiling joists. The architects each formed attachments to particular details, Leng said, which allowed them to “lavish tender, loving care to individual aspects of the project.”

Studio J. Jih and Figure considered their working methods with thoughtful intentionality. Ly recalled that they “simulated a mini-studio project in how they assembled the brief,” which makes sense, as all three are also educators: Jih at MIT, Leng and Ly at the University of California, Berke-

ley. The chance to “benefit from each other’s expertise and ability as critics was particularly powerful,” Jih said. The interest continued after completion, with Leng taking photographs and the team generating postoccupancy documentation from 3D scans of the interior.

Throughout, the two practices were in ongoing conversation about how they “could leverage a sharing of resources,” Leng offered. “As a single firm starting out, it might be difficult to find projects and then to handle more than one project. ... How can we share in ways that create a testing ground for a new paradigm of practice?” These offices join other voices asking the same question. Jih observed that the world now demands “forms of coauthorship that are inventive and challenge the paradigm of singular genius figures.” ●

BELOW A grid of new south-facing windows brightens the living room. Above, the ceiling joints are left partially exposed.



James Leng



unika vaev

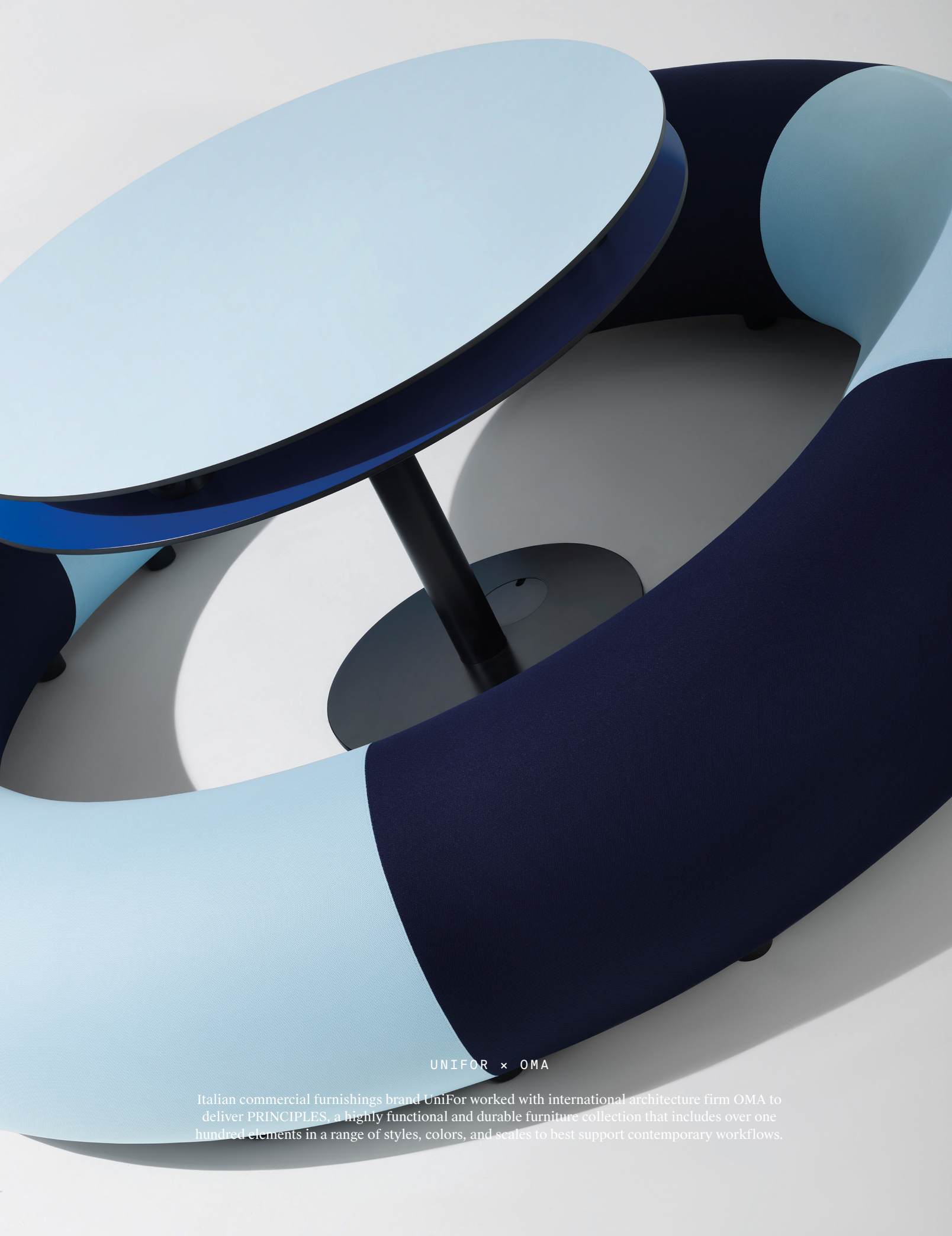
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Acoustics & Textiles
by Unika Vaev

Two Heads



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The Herman Miller x HAY Collection is a contemporary reinterpretation of eight beloved Eames midcentury classics. Featuring new colorways and updated materials, the collection brings these 20th century designs up to current standards.



UNIFOR × OMA

Italian commercial furnishings brand UniFor worked with international architecture firm OMA to deliver PRINCIPLES, a highly functional and durable furniture collection that includes over one hundred elements in a range of styles, colors, and scales to best support contemporary workflows.



HOLLOWAY LI × UMA

Designed by London duo Holloway Li and the innovative fabricators at Uma, the T4 series is a playful modular furniture collection that nods to the nostalgia of 90s decor. The lightweight composite form was inspired by the interior fit outs of original London buses and is available in four colorways: Melon Yellow, Blush Pink, Overground Orange, and Cream Soda.

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This capsule collection reimagines four archival chairs from Irish design studio Orior in a series of signature bold patterns from New York-based fashion designer Christopher John Rogers. The proceeds from the capsule are donated directly to Color of Change, a national nonprofit civil rights advocacy organization.



MATTER × JAMIE WOLFOND

Flash Set is a series of nearly 100 texture-rich sculptures by Toronto-based designer Jamie Wolfond for notable New York City gallery, showroom, and manufacturer, Matter. Inspired by the passage of light through growing moss, each unique piece is carved from gypsum cement and spray painted.

Top: César Bultrago; Bottom: Sean Davidson; Facing Page: William Jess Laird



IN COMMON WITH × SOPHIE LOU JACOBSEN

Since 2020, the founders of Brooklyn-based lighting studio In Common With have been working with French American glass designer Sophie Lou Jacobsen to realize the Flora Series, a 20-piece collection of hand-blown, mold-blown, and slumped glass light fixtures. Employing classic Venetian glassmaking techniques, Flora represents the intersection of old-world craftsmanship and contemporary Murano-glass influences like Carlo Scarpa, Paolo Venini, and Ettore Sottsass.



EMECO × AFTERNOON LIGHT

Powder coated in a deep green, Afternoon Light's take on Emeco's classic 1940s Navy Officer Swivel Chair includes a seat and back upholstered in Maharam's reissue of Mexidot fabric by Alexander Girard. The chair is also available in vanilla powder coating with cream Mexidot and is sold exclusively through Afternoon Light, a new e-commerce destination for furniture and home décor.

ZAHA HADID DESIGN × KARIMOKU FURNITURE

The SEYUN chair is the first piece in an ongoing collaborative furniture collection between the global architecture firm and the Japanese wood manufacturer. SEYUN juxtaposes ZHD's signature curvilinear forms with Karimoku's artisan woodworking skills and advanced manufacturing capabilities.



Top: Mary Manning; Bottom: Masaki Ogawa



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Nested Villas

Johnston Marklee's flagship showroom for HOLLY HUNT polishes an existing industrial space.

Text by Matt Hickman

ONE LONG, unbending stretch of North Highland is unassuming, as far as Los Angeles streetscapes go. Its gas stations, doughnut shops, and a low-slung patchwork of commercial storefronts and light industrial buildings are typical haunts on this major north-south L.A. artery.

Over the past decade, galleries, design showrooms, and high-end retailers have quietly moved in, forming a nascent art and design district where, to paraphrase Sharon Johnston, founding partner of L.A.-based architecture firm Johnston Marklee, you'll find a lumberyard next door and a pet hotel across the street.

Johnston is describing the location of North Highland's newest destination-denizen, the L.A. flagship of luxury interior brand HOLLY HUNT. Housed within a corner-hugging, 1940s-era concrete warehouse, the flagship strikes a modest presence from the street; inside, Johnston transformed the raw, two-story space into a dynamic showroom suffused with bronze and leather accents. The expanse is anchored by a pair of freestanding, multiroom "villas" flanked by an interior promenade that forms an open, double-height gallery along the showroom's natural light-flooded eastern facade.

"By nesting two villas within the warehouse, which

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PREVIOUS SPREAD The interior rooms are darker and serve as staging areas for furniture and lighting pieces.

ABOVE The double-height area along the eastern facade is brightly illuminated, making it an ideal place to meet and examine finishes.

are further delineated by materials—raw oak flooring within the rooms of the house and light gray terrazzo outside—and through lighting, daylighting, and various furniture vignettes, we create generous, domestically scaled interior spaces, while the surrounding spaces preserve the tall ceilings and views to the city,” Johnston explained to *ANInterior*.

The “house within a house” concept realized at HOLLY HUNT Los Angeles is the latest Johnston Marklee-helmed adaptive reuse effort; another recent example is UCLA’s newly completed Margo Leavin Graduate Art Studios in Culver City. “In the HOLLY HUNT Los Angeles showroom and the UCLA project we embraced the opportunity to treat the existing warehouses as as-found archaeology, preserving the patina and materiality of the existing buildings, removing outmoded elements, and then optimizing the existing condi-

tions for contemporary uses,” Johnston said.

Complementing HOLLY HUNT’s existing L.A. presence at the Pacific Design Center (the brand will retain one of its two showrooms there, which will focus on textiles, wallcoverings, and leather), the new North Highland flagship has a patently L.A. mystique to it—a certain furtive allure inapplicable to the Cesar Pelli-designed “Blue Whale.”

“We love L.A. spots that are a bit background and gritty, from the scale of the car or even the sidewalk, woven into the fabric of the city, but are full of surprises in scale, inside-outside experiences, and atmosphere—the distinct light of Southern California—on the inside,” Johnston said. “Projects like HOLLY HUNT Los Angeles are both timeless and ephemeral, and with each visit one will discover something new.” ●



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Deep Purple

An Aesop store by Odami offers a chance to repurpose local materials and histories.

Text by Sebastián López Cardozo



ABOVE The store's layout takes inspiration from the neighborhood's urban context. Repurposed maple balusters line the space's walls.

RIGHT A cylindrical Fragrance Library hosts the brand's growing collection of smells and sports an infusion chamber to brighten the scent of clothing in need of a refresh.



TORONTO, CANADA'S LARGEST CITY, still carries scars from the brutal battles over planning and preservation in the 1960s and '70s. Aesop's third store in the city, designed by Toronto-based studio Odami, confronts this legacy and responds with symbolic usage of the city's social and material history.

Located in Yorkville, a neighborhood known for its upscale retail and incessant parading of exotic cars, the recently completed skincare store nods to the long-lost countercultural forces that shaped its streets.

"Inspiration for the design came from the recently demolished 1969 York Square project by Diamond and Myers," Michael Fohring, Odami's cofounder, told *AN Interior*. "By adapting existing Victorian structures to a denser, differently programmed scheme, it showed us a good example of how Yorkville was going against the grain and mediating between scales and histories."

The store layout replicates Yorkville's block patterns of variously sized and textured parks, squares, and lanes at a smaller scale. Coated in burgundy paint, the interior's edge-



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ABOVE A freestanding Corian island includes sink basins. Niches offer recesses for both merchandise display and sitting.

es thicken and swell to create smaller enclaves within: A tea station, fragrance library, and infusion chamber punctuate rhythms of hard and soft surfaces, evoking the dark, warm atmosphere of a Victorian parlor.

Repurposed maple balusters—built to a former building code and now too short for their intended use—pattern the undulating perimeter. “We came across a large unused stock of balusters sitting in a woodturner’s warehouse, and we saw an opportunity to repurpose these in the design,” Aránzazu González Bernardo, Odami’s other cofounder,

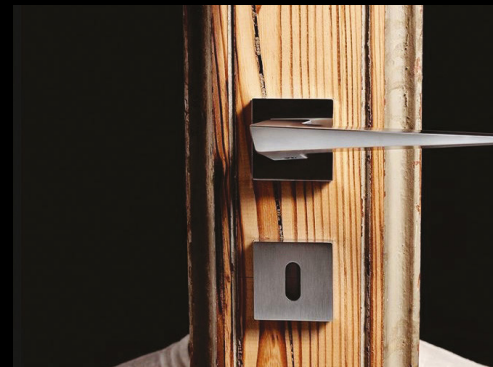
said. “This was a clear reference to the city’s history.” Circulation in the remaining open space flows around a large Corian basin.

For Fohring and González Bernardo, the decision about how to anchor the design came from an understanding that Toronto’s seemingly sterile history is very much alive, if you dig a little bit. González Bernardo said, “There is this assumption in North American cities that everything is new and that designers don’t engage any histories because there are none to be engaged.” ●

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AN INTERIOR

TOP 50

ARCHITECTS

& DESIGNERS

Now in its fifth iteration, *AN Interior's* Top 50 recognizes the best North American architecture and design companies working in interiors today. Each year, *AN's* editors assemble a lineup that attempts balance—from smaller, emerging practices to larger, established firms; from design centers in New York and Los Angeles to cities across the continent; from high-end projects to budget-conscious commissions. What matters is the attention and creativity these teams deliver, and what follows is fashioned from the images and words they use to describe themselves. These outfits demonstrate a commitment to both craft and materials, and their efforts result in spaces that combine richness with comfort. Above all, this diverse listing aims to recognize talent known and about-to-be-known: While these pages contain many familiar practices, about half are new to this list. We are watching their work—and you should, too.

New York; London; Accra, Ghana

Adjaye Associates



Adjaye Associates strives for an architecture that enriches daily life and meets the diverse needs of the communities it serves. Notions of place-making, identity, memory, and meaning are central to the office's design process.

→ adjaye.com



ARCHITECTURE RESEARCH OFFICE

New York

Architecture Research Office (ARO) is a diverse collective united by a collaborative process, commitment to accountable action, and social and environmental responsibility. The office works with leaders and communities to design projects that reveal the hidden potential within architectural and urban constraints.

→ aro.net

ASHE LEANDRO

New York

Established in 2008, Ashe Leandro approaches each project—whether it is residential or commercial, furniture or product design—with a unique vision integral to the office's design philosophy, as it embraces “instinct, ingenuity, and humor over traditional design convention.”

→ asheleandro.com



ASSEMBLEDGE+

Los Angeles

Founded and led by David Thompson, Assembledge+ pursues an architecture that is driven by a commitment to collaboration and craftsmanship, with the goal of creating enduring environments that are user-focused, innovative, and sustainable.

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Los Angeles

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BROOKS + SCARPA

Hawthorne, California;
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

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CHARLAP HYMAN & HERRERO

New York; Los Angeles

Charlap Hyman & Herrero (CHH) takes an integrated approach to conceptualizing and executing spaces. Working in various typologies, CHH considers divergent art forms and aims to create spaces that become worlds unto themselves, as Gesamtkunstwerk is at the core of the firm's objective.

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CHEN + SUCHART STUDIO

Scottsdale, Arizona

Chen + Suchart Studio works at scales ranging from small, well-crafted projects and single-family residences to larger-scale urban designs. The common thread between all projects undertaken in the studio is the transcendence of style.

→ chensuchartstudio.com

COMMON WORKS ARCHITECTS

Oklahoma City

Common Works Architects is an architecture and design studio established by Asa Highsmith in 2015. Often faced with budget and craft limitations, the practice leverages simple, small moves to achieve greater effects.

→ commonworks.archi



F ↓



DESIGN, BITCHES

Los Angeles

Founded in 2010 by Catherine Johnson and Rebecca Rudolph, Design, Bitches possesses a bold and irreverent vision that makes architecture significant in daily life. Their multidisciplinary firm draws inspiration from the duo's eclectic expertise in design, art, and pop culture.

→ designbitches.com

FRIDA ESCOBEDO

Mexico City

Frida Escobedo established her studio in 2006. In 2018 she became the youngest architect to design the prestigious Serpentine Pavilion in London. Earlier this year, she was selected to realize the renovation of The Met's modern and contemporary galleries.

→ fridaescobedo.com

D ↓



DEBORAH BURKE PARTNERS

New York

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Brooklyn, New York

Frederick Tang Architecture



Frederick Tang Architecture is a ten-person studio that provides architecture and design services as well as custom offerings in branding, graphic, product, and experience design. The studio emphasizes experimentation, curiosity, and collaboration in its iterative design process.

→ fredericktang.com

G ↓

Brooklyn, New York
GRT Architects



GRT's partners, Tal Schori and Rustam-Marc Mehta, met in third grade. Since founding GRT in 2014, they have established a trademark of work that marries confidently voiced aesthetics with technical excellence, often alongside or in dialogue with a historical fabric.

→ grtarchitects.com



HÖWELER + YOON
Boston

Höweler + Yoon is an architecture practice and creative studio that believes design is an instrument for imagining and implementing change. For 18 years, the firm has built a reputation for work that is formally and technologically innovative, socially engaged, and conceptually rigorous.

→ howeleryoon.com

HR DESIGN DEPT
Houston

Hughes Rowell Design Dept is an architecture studio founded in 2018 with the belief that architecture should be collaborative, responsive, and responsible. The office specializes in modern residential and commercial projects.

→ hrdesigndept.com



H ↓



HASTINGS

Nashville, Tennessee

Founded in 1985, HASTINGS is deeply committed to design and community. It produces award-winning sustainable architecture that positively impacts clients and society at large. HASTINGS's services include architecture, interior design, planning, and sustainability consulting.

→ hastingsarchitecture.com

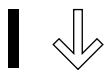


HOME STUDIOS

Brooklyn, New York

Former fiction editor Oliver Haslegrave founded Home Studios, a close-knit, collaborative team of 15 with accomplished backgrounds in architecture, interiors, custom fabrication and fine art to illuminate the stories of clients through a process that is intuitive, exacting, and attentive.

→ homestudios.nyc



IVY STUDIO

Montreal

Ivy Studio is an office of architecture that reimagines the boundaries of design. The firm's collaborative approach challenges industry standards to create unique spaces that propel brands further.

→ ivystudio.ca



JOHNSTON MARKLEE

Los Angeles

Established in 1998, Johnston Marklee, led by founding partners Sharon Johnston and Mark Lee, has been recognized nationally and internationally with over 40 major awards and numerous publications. The office's projects are diverse in scale and type and span 14 countries.

→ johnstonmarklee.com



KATHERINE HOGAN ARCHITECTS

Raleigh, North Carolina

Katherine Hogan Architects is a woman-owned firm that has crafted a diverse body of work. The office is recognized for using ordinary materials in inventive ways and is committed to working on projects that make a difference in its community.

→ katherinehoganarchitects.com

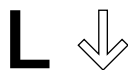
Chicago

Kwong Von Glinow



Kwong Von Glinow is founded on the belief that architecture is meant to be enjoyed. Taking an optimistic and explorative approach, the office focuses on creating innovative living environments, places for cultural engagement, urban public space, and contemporary workspaces.

→ kwongvonglinow.com



LANDRY SMITH ARCHITECT

Portland, Oregon

Landry Smith Architect is a conceptually driven office interested in the opportunities afforded by precise decisionmaking and the fundamentals of the architectural discipline to achieve maximum effect. This strategy aims to produce work that is at once essential and open-ended.

→ landrysmith.com





LECKIE STUDIO ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN

Vancouver

Leckie Studio Architecture + Design was founded in 2015 by principal architect Michael Leckie. The office engages in the practice of design across a range of scales and media and seeks to initiate cultural change through design.

→ leckiestudio.com

New York; Los Angeles

Leong Leong



Founded in 2009, Leong Leong is a minority-owned architecture firm and creative agency that uses the power of design to advance visionary social agendas within the built environment for institutions, cultural enterprises, and forward-thinking clients.

→ leong-leong.com



MICHAEL K CHEN ARCHITECTURE

New York

Michael K Chen Architecture (MKCA) provides innovative and superbly crafted work for clients seeking thoughtful and considered design. The office's approach is informed by curiosity and a love of tinkering, drawing, discourse, and making.

→ mkca.com



MARLON BLACKWELL ARCHITECTS

Fayetteville, Arkansas

Since 1990, Marlon Blackwell Architects has designed award-winning, environmentally responsive projects. The office believes that architecture can happen anywhere, at any scale, at any budget—for anyone. It uses an economy of means to deliver maximum meaning.

→ marlonblackwell.com



MICHAEL HSU OFFICE OF ARCHITECTURE

Austin, Texas; Houston

Founded in 2005, Michael Hsu Office of Architecture believes that design is for everyone. The office designs with empathy and to elicit emotion. It believes in the active collaboration of designer, client, and artisan to create a sense of well-being.

→ hsuoffice.com

MURRAY LEGGE ARCHITECTS

Austin, Texas

The work of Murray Legge Architects reveals the extraordinary opportunities that exist in the ordinary. Employing a creative process that deeply considers practical issues of design, the office examines how materials, space, and light create places that resonate and engage.

→ murraylegge.com



0 ↓

OJT

New Orleans

Led by Jonathan Tate, OJT is an architecture and urban design practice focused on thoughtful design. Its work varies in project type and scale. The office brings the same intensity of imagination and invention to everything it does.

→ officejt.com



OLSON KUNDIG

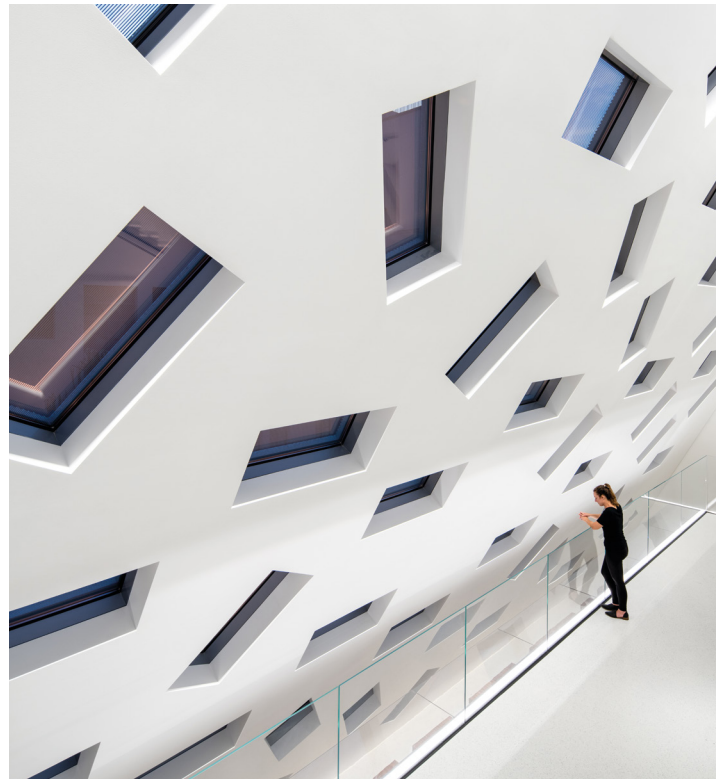
Seattle; New York

Olson Kundig is led by 14 principals/owners who are supported by a team of over 250. Every completed project manifests a “macro-to-micro” level of attention, from the big ideas to the smallest details.

→ olsonkundig.com

Rotterdam; Hong Kong; New York;
Queensland, Australia; Doha, Qatar

OMA New York



OMA is an international practice operating within the traditional boundaries of architecture and urbanism. The office is led by eight partners: Rem Koolhaas, Reinier de Graaf, Ellen van Loon, Shohei Shigematsu, Iyad Alsaka, Chris van Duijn, Jason Long, and David Gianotten.

→ oma.com

N ↓

NORMAN KELLEY

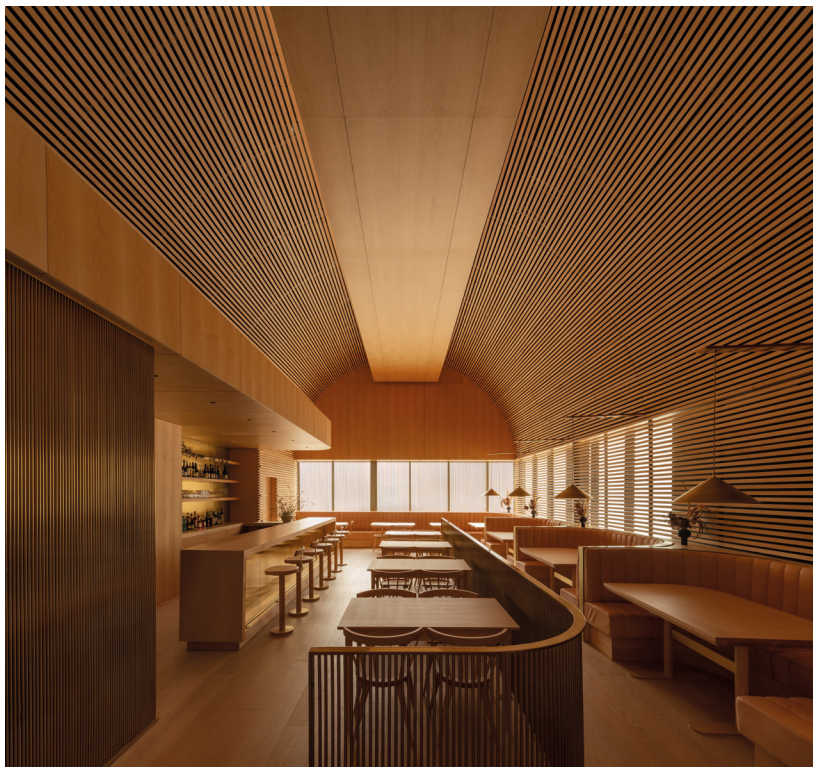
Chicago

Founded in 2012 by Carrie Norman and Thomas Kelley, Norman Kelley works in the fields of residential architecture, commercial interiors, furniture design, exhibition design, and design criticism. Its process is collaborative, sensitive to place, and irreverent to tradition.

→ normankelley.us

Halifax, Nova Scotia; Toronto

Omar Gandhi Architect



Founded in 2010, Omar Gandhi Architect is an award-winning modern architecture studio.

→ omargandhi.com



ONLY IF—

Brooklyn, New York

Only If— is a design practice for architecture and urbanism founded in 2013 by Adam Snow Frampton and Karolina Czekczek. The office focuses on fundamental questions and potentials with the ambition to create clarity and simplicity within often-complex circumstances and constraints.

→ only-if.com

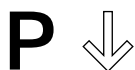


PÉREZ PALACIOS ARQUITECTOS ASOCIADOS

Mexico City

Pérez Palacios Arquitectos Asociados (PPAA) is driven by an architecture of ideas over an architecture of forms. The office conceives of architecture as an open medium, one that is constantly tested. PPAA follows an inclination for nature to create sensorial atmospheres.

→ perezpalacios.mx



PART OFFICE

Los Angeles

Part Office is a design studio founded by Kristin Korven and Jeff Kaplon in 2015. The office works on projects of all scales, from singular objects to large developments (with many homes in between).

→ partoffice.com

PENTAGON

Los Angeles

Pentagon was founded in 2014 by Ben Crawford, Tyler McMartin, Paul Stoelting, Dale Strong, and Paul Trussler.

→ pentagon.la



R ↓

RAVI HANDA ARCHITECT

Montreal

Ravi Handa is a licensed architect whose practice is dedicated to what physical space makes us feel. By optimizing space, quality of light, and energy consumption, he believes architecture can inspire serenity, highlighting our interconnectedness to our environment.

→ rha.works

S ↓

SPIEGEL AIHARA WORKSHOP

San Francisco

Spiegel Aihara Workshop (SAW) is a transdisciplinary design firm operating at the nexus of architecture, landscape, and urban design, allowing the company to work across scales and timelines at the onset of a project. SAW views design as a collaborative, research-based process.

→ sawinc.com



SHIN SHIN

Los Angeles; Detroit

Shin Shin Architecture is a female- and minority-owned architecture and design firm cofounded by sisters Melissa and Amanda Shin. The office provides a full-service architectural experience for residential, commercial, and cultural projects of all scales.

→ shinshinarch.com

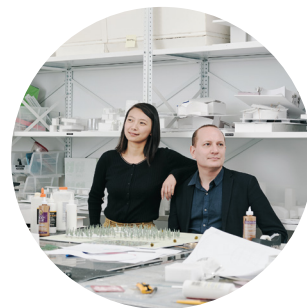
New York; Beijing

Steven Holl Architects



Steven Holl Architects (SHA) is a 28-person architecture and urban design office that works globally from two locations. SHA is recognized for its ability to shape space and light with great contextual sensitivity and to catalyze each project's unique qualities.

→ stevenholl.com



SO - IL

Brooklyn, New York

Diverse in origin, SO - IL's team of collaborators speaks a dozen languages and is informed by global narratives and perspectives. Working with ambitious clients, the office explores how the creation of environments and objects inspires lasting positive intellectual and societal engagement.

→ so-il.org

U ↓



UNDECORATED

Detroit

Ishtiaq Jabir Rafiuddin started UNDECORATED in 2017. Previously, he cofounded the co-working space Based In and the visualization studio Mimaj and worked for REX and OMA. Born in Bangladesh, Rafiuddin has lived in Dhaka, New York, Buffalo, Istanbul, and Detroit.

→ undecorated.us



UTILE

Boston

Utile thrives on solving complex urban problems in intelligent, pragmatic ways. From theoretical issues that frame policy to the practical implementation of architectural commissions, the office uses a rigorous, research-based approach to find the best answers.

→ utiledesign.com

W ↓

Los Angeles

Woods + Dangan



Woods + Dangan creates modern homes through dialogue and exploration. The office collaborates with its clients throughout the design process and works with trusted trades persons to deliver work that is uncompromising in its craftsmanship.

→ woodsangan.com

WORKAC

New York

WORKac creates architecture and strategic planning concepts at the intersection of the urban, the rural, and the natural. The office strives to develop intelligent and shared infrastructures and to achieve a more careful integration between architecture, landscape, and ecological systems.

→ work.ac



WORRELL YEUNG

Brooklyn, New York

Led by Max Worrell and Jeon Yeung, the practice synthesizes complex systems and needs into clear solutions. The office approaches conceptualization and construction with equal concern, making work that appears simple and unembellished but is rooted in rigorous, innovative design.

→ worrellyeung.com

Tranquility. Comfort. Salubriousness. In this special section, we explore how these qualities are in high demand for interior spaces and especially in our homes. Whether it's due to the harrowing news cycle or our seemingly constant entanglement with digital technology, anxiety and depression are on the rise. In response, interior architecture is meant to provide succor and sanctuary from the harsh conditions of contemporary life. Achieving this

effect often comes down to which surfaces architects select for their projects. On the following pages, we highlight the trend of natural and neutral palettes that lend serenity to interior spaces. We also dive into two residential renovation projects that transform existing interiors into havens of calm. And we gather our favorite cozy rugs and embraceable wallcoverings, all perfect products to put one at ease.

Surfaces & Textiles

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Clear the Way

SAW reimagines a cluttered midcentury bungalow by opening its core to outdoor views.

By Hannah Fredericks

PROJECT TITLE
The Middle Half

ARCHITECT
Spiegel Aihara Workshop (SAW)

LOCATION
Mill Valley, California





ABOVE A window in the angled corridor leading to the main living area creates a unique vignette of juxtaposing wood species: rough sawn western red cedar siding, reclaimed white oak flooring, and a custom live-edge table.

LEFT Abundant outdoor patio space capitalizes upon Mill Valley's scenic landscape and favorable weather.

The layout of SAW's The Middle Half is deceptively simple: It masses rooms around a central common space with panoramic views of the hills in Mill Valley, north of San Francisco. But until its recent renovation, the 2,746-square-foot midcentury home had a segmented layout of small rooms and a congested core. SAW preserved the home's outermost rooms and blew out the middle, clearing the way for natural views throughout the house. The remaining rooms were then connected with a new clarity.

"Often when thinking about preserving a thing—a structure, an object, a landscape, a city—one talks about preserving its 'heart' or its 'core,'" Dan Spiegel, co-principal of SAW, told *AN Interior*. "But in this case, it was the opposite—we were trying to preserve the periphery while

completely reimagining the core.” Flowing from the entrance to the backyard, the “core” space encompasses the kitchen and dining, living, and family rooms. Flanked by private spaces on either side, the core space stitches the house together spatially and establishes an orientation toward the sweeping terrain beyond.

Layering old with new, SAW utilized reclaimed white oak from local barns for the floors and bookshelf, while white walls, Raw Concrete Caesarstone and PentalQuartz Santenay Honed countertops, Foscarini pendants, and custom cabinetry infuse clarity and modernity. In the kitchen, gray tiles from Sonoma Tilemakers form a neutral backdrop.

Above, the original Douglas fir rafters were refinished to match the warm red cedar siding on the exterior. Outside, the red cedar rafters match the siding and establish a rough,

knotty texture that is complemented by the cool-toned galvanized steel supporting columns and beams.

Throughout, “the most critical building elements—the steel and wood beams and columns—break free of the constraints of the interior walls to carve out and define volumes of exterior space,” Megumi Aihara, co-principal of SAW, told *AN Interior*. These elements frame “views as pictorial scenes.” Exposed structural elements eliminate the need for ornament: The steel beams are playfully revealed in the living room, and the rhythm of wood rafters continues from the front entrance into the backyard, uninterrupted even when skylights pierce the ceiling above. As the structure extends outdoors, material layers are subtracted until only the trellis remains. The composition makes space and defines views, connecting the disparate halves of the home into a cohesive whole. ●

BELOW Warm grays from the Caesarstone Raw Concrete and Pental Santenay Honed counters complement the extensive wood flooring, siding, and ceiling.



Mikiko Kikuyama



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Photo Credit: Bates Masi + Architects

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Architect: Bates Masi + Architects, East Hampton, NY
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Modern Marble

Alexander & Co. raids the quarry to brighten a 1990s cliffside Sydney home.

By Audrey Wachs

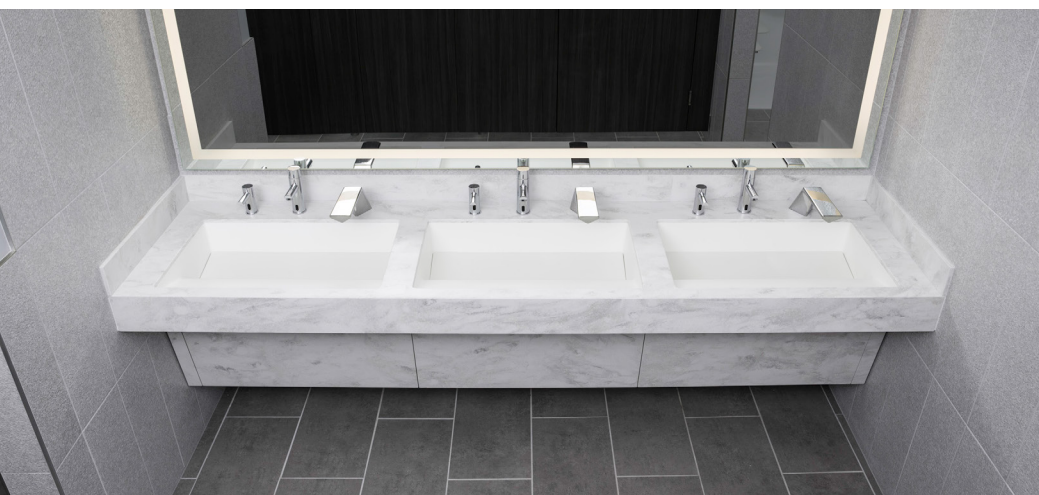
PROJECT TITLE
Pacific House

ARCHITECT
Alexander & Co.

LOCATION
Sydney, Australia



ABOVE AND LEFT The supple, curving form of the indisputably 90s home compliments the soothing interiors.



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While 1990s homes are not as shockingly retro as the avocado-green and burnt-orange trends of the 1970s, interiors in their second or third decade of life are usually in desperate need of a refresh.

That's exactly what Alexander & Co.'s Shelby Griffiths and Jordan Fleming delivered in Pacific House, a 1990s concrete-framed home overlooking the ocean in Sydney, Australia. Their team, alongside principal architect Jeremy Bull, reconfigured the layout, opening up the dark interior with blond-wood and marble surfaces galore to take advantage of the stunning scenery and honor the client's taste for classical architecture with a contemporary twist.

Before attempting any interior design, the architect reworked the house's awkward circulation to make it easier for the clients to spend quality time with their children and enjoy the ocean views.

While traditional marble interiors often feel stuffy, Griffiths and Fleming strategically deployed white and gray marble surfaces to reflect light throughout the kitchen, bathrooms, and common areas. In the courtyard-facing kitchen, terrazzo-like floors are made from Carrara, Grigio Firma, and Grigio Lana marbles. The oak ceiling is accentuated by American oak veneer joinery by JP Finsbury, while the suave Bianco Carrara marble backsplash and

BELOW An iconic Camaleonda Sofa, designed by Italian architect Mario Bellini in 1971 for B&B Italia, sits atop a thick pile rug that echoes the large-format terrazzo floors in the kitchen.

Anson Smart





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ABOVE The oak motif continues into the bedroom where a custom headboard contrasts the gray-soaked master bedroom.

LEFT, TOP Abundant natural light illuminates the varying grains, veins, and patterns that coexist within the kitchen.

LEFT, BOTTOM A bold mix of marble, terrazzo, and tile elevate the monochrome master bath.



island further amplify the brightness of the floors, cabinets, and ceiling.

The kitchen's lightness extends to intimate and common areas across the five-bedroom house. In the powder room, the designers chose Smeraldo Quartzite for the vanity to add a pop of green against DK Carrara White honed stone skirting and sleek gray tumbled floor tiles by Surface Gallery. In the primary bedroom, a custom-made, American oak veneer headboard recalls the kitchen's oak finishes. Downstairs, shared areas are punctuated by archways framed in Grigio Firma marble, one of the three stones used in the kitchen floor. Some of the interior archways are fitted with pocket doors, while exterior doors frame the spectacular view.

With its extensive renovation, the blond wood and shimmering marble preserve a hint of the home's '90s mystique, but this 21st-century home is now undoubtedly contemporary. ●



MARAZZI 

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49 East 21st Street

NYC 10010

www.daltile.com | www.marazzitile.com



While neutrals have always been in vogue, it's no coincidence that Behr Paint Company just announced Blank Canvas, a warm white, as its 2023 Color of the Year. After the surge in home renovation and redecoration brought on by the pandemic, calm, neutral designs now dominate our interiors. Architects and designers are leaning into the desire to create space—be it an office, a hotel lobby, a clothing store, or a family living room—that feels serene and inviting. As a result, current collections and expanded color offerings by product manufacturers meet this rising demand for beiges, browns, taupes, grays, and creams. These new high-performance textiles, tiles, and surfaces are sure to deliver this sought-after calm and sophistication to your next project.

By Sophie Aliece Hollis



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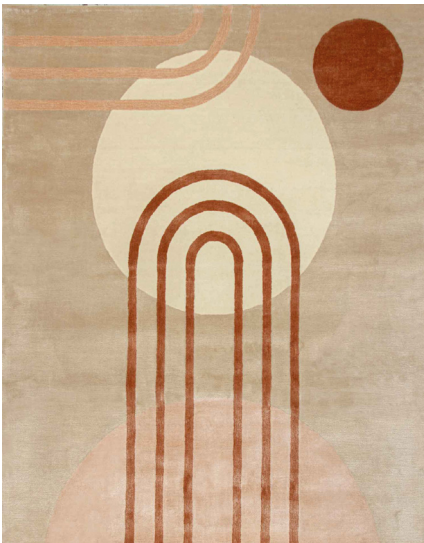
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Wallcoverings

Perhaps the most prevalent combination of art and architecture, wallcoverings provide a unique opportunity for these two disciplines to intersect. As architects put up walls to achieve a certain spatial experience, artful and carefully selected wallcoverings serve as a powerful tool in adding further depth and poignancy. Color, texture, and pattern are just a few of the unique features you'll notice in these latest wallcovering products from a group of established manufacturers as well as new faces in the industry. We've even included a number of collaborations with artists who work in a variety of fields—fashion, set design, drawing, and more. *By Sophie Aliee Hollis*



1. **LA CARAVENE** Élitis. elitis.fr • 2. **GESTURE** Calico Wallpaper. calicowallpaper.com • 3. **SOUTACHE** Innovations. innovationsusa.com • 4. **PECOSA BY MELODIE ALLEGRE** Eskayel. eskayel.com • 5. **POIRET** Block Shop Textiles. blockshoptextiles.com • 6. **THE ROYAL MENAGERIE BY CATHERINE MARTIN** Mokum. mokumtextiles.com



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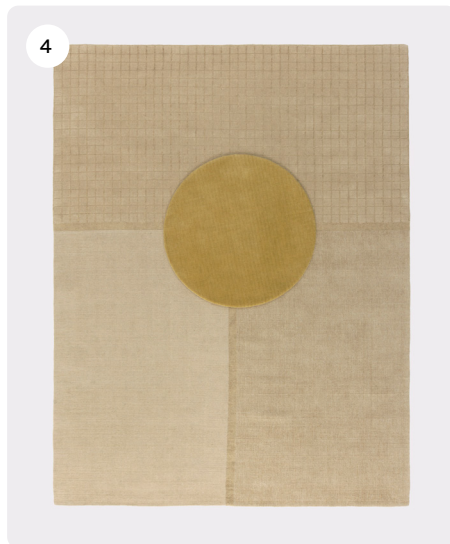
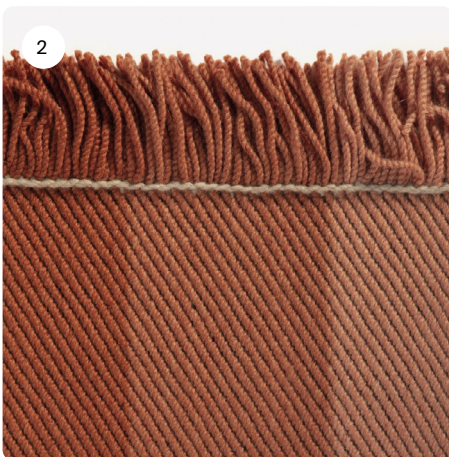
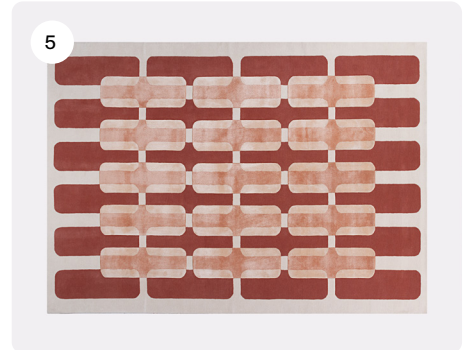
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Rugs

Although the rug beneath your feet might not be the first thing you notice when you step into a room, details underfoot are testaments to long, careful, and even ancient design and manufacturing processes. With decades of study and experience, the following rug manufacturers have adopted and perfected complex weaving techniques, gathered the finest natural materials, and carefully surveyed the industry to deliver products that meet the demands of today. Whether you're in the market for a luxurious statement piece or a sturdy and sustainable option for heavy-traffic areas, this selection of newly released rugs is sure to appeal to a range of design and aesthetic needs and sensibilities.

By Sophie Aliece Hollis



1. **FRAMED AP13** &Tradition. andtradition.com • 2. **WAVE**. Maharam. maharam.com • 3. **SANDRA JORDAN PRIMA ALPACA BY ERDEN** ERDEN. erdenusa.com • 4. **CEREMONY BY MAE ENGELGEER** cc-tapis.com • 5. **MAILLON BY LILI GAYMAN** Roche Bobois. roche-bobois.com • 6. **HAPPY BY SANDRA FIGUEROLA** GAN. gan-rugs.com • 7. **SAND CARPET BY SJOERD VROONLAND** Moooi. moooi.com



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industrial interior.

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Bigness

Text by Samuel Medina
Photography by Francisco Ascensão



PREVIOUS SPREAD The extensive interior overwhelms any objects, so the fixed pieces take on their own character to become distinctive.

FACING PAGE A curving wall, punctuated by two four-panel windows and a half-circle door splits the large space.

BELOW The front facade is strikingly composed: above, blue and green shades and black squares; and below, concrete, openings filled with glass blocks, and a yellow door.

IN 2005, the Casa da Musica opened to great acclaim in Porto, Portugal. Curiously, OMA's design of the performance center was originally developed as a house; as Rem Koolhaas told it, he simply enlarged—embiggened—the latter to fit the parameters of the former.

Five miles southeast of the Casa da Musica, in the deindustrial Freixo neighborhood, a similar feat of scalar prestidigitation can be found. Inside the House of Many Faces, designed by the Porto-based fala atelier, the prospect of mere dwelling is taken to its limit, as any sense of proportion becomes deliriously irrelevant. “This one-bedroom house has the scale of four or five entire houses,” Filipe Magalhães, a cofounder of fala atelier, told *AN Interior*. He struggled to properly gauge the interior, including the living room (approximately 3,800 square feet). “You can probably fit 15 cars inside,” he said.

The home, for a bachelor, occupies a former warehouse whose bones fala preserved nearly in their entirety. Three-foot-thick granite walls supply structure, while 150-year-old timber trusses, though they continue to play their original role, seem to dance below the ceiling (24 feet at its highest point). Cloth lines the bottom of a new roof punctuated with skylights at regular intervals. Aside from its white paint, which softens the stone walls' toughness, and buffed concrete floors, surface finishes are spare. The exception is the curvy, tiled bathroom in the walk-up apartment at the rear, separated from the cavernous living room by a small courtyard.

“When the client came to us with this property, the building was continuous. We told him, ‘You need to bring light in,’” said Magalhães, who leads fala with Ahmed Belk-hodja and Ana Luisa Soares. “But because we couldn't afford to add more space, we knew we were going to have to do Gordon Matta-Clark cutouts.”



**“You will never fill this space, no matter how much furniture you put in there.”
—Filipe Magalhães**





FACING PAGE On the second floor, chromed tubes act as support, guardrail, and handrail. The angled wall conceals millwork behind.

ABOVE An array of circular mirrors creates visual distortions in the upstairs bathroom.

The reference is typical of the small firm, which has realized dozens of mostly residential projects in its hometown that all somehow play with optics. At the Freixo house, the cutout procedure (memorialized by a tangle of exposed rebar that crowns a sawed-off lintel) increased the envelope's surface area, doubling the number of facades. Those titular "faces" juggle a handful of elements: the blue and green quadrangles of shades and shutters, respectively; modular black appliqué; yellow doorways; the gray concrete supports; wedges of refractory glass blocks. In this sequence of short elevations, a fifth, wavy interior one marks an uncanny threshold; its Donald Judd-like square windows transmit views from a guest room on the far eastern end of the home to the hangar-like main space.

These surfaces don't detract from the craft of the sculptural totems that punctuate the vast interior. These impressive pieces—consisting of a freestanding fireplace ("the

heaviest fireplace on the planet," said Magalhães), a comically tall conical kitchen hood, and a monumental breakfront—might be considered "mini architectures" in their own right. Considerable thought has been put into their form, structure, and material construction, which suggests the wayward attitude of contemporary installation art. But as impressive as they are, these elements are lost at sea in the living room. Even the prominent wood trusses appear twiggy and tactile. There is both a quietude and a deadpan quality to the space, not unlike that of a *kunsthalle*. If anything, it seems like a dare, or a polemical adaptation of "bigness," Rem's mid-'90s coinage to describe the viral, anarchitectural, corporate, and commercial spaces of the new millennium. "The project definitely tests an uncertain domesticity," Magalhães said. "You will never fill this space, no matter how much furniture you put in there. Even the fireplace looks like a toy. I joked to the client that it should be coin-operated." ●



Norman Kelley readies
a Chicago loft for
artful inhabitation.

Text by Alaina Griffin
Photography by Kendall
McCaugherty Ristau

Above

and

Below



“Can we produce a space where you can live with a collection that evolves over time?”
—Spencer McNeil

IN THE NEAR NORTH SIDE neighborhood of Chicago, the owner of a long, narrow industrial loft apartment was looking to expand. The solution was to connect to the unit below and create a pivotal two-story atrium space that could serve as the social and spatial hub of the gut renovation project. While simple enough, the graceful suture of the two units created distinct but complementary spaces that feature custom details and artistic displays.

The owner commissioned Norman Kelley, an architecture office led by Thomas Kelley and Carrie Norman from Chicago and New Orleans, respectively, in partnership with architect and educator Spencer McNeil, to design a renovation

that would be livable without being conspicuous. Using the existing rhythm of the concrete-and-glass building, the team organized the flow of the apartment around a central arterial corridor that eventually expands into the primary living space. “There were a lot of elements that metered or organized rooms that were already existing,” Kelley told *AN Interior*. “Where we came in was to kind of suggest different window dressings, mitigate light, and/or positions of furniture and walls that would start to connect with the existing rhythm of the building in a way that felt natural.”

In the double-height living room, for example, a flood of sunlight and views are softened at will by window dress-

ings so tall and substantial they can hardly be called curtains, and original concrete columns interspersed in the interior help determine room dimensions. The organization of the space is also facilitated by its palette: Light tones pulled from the white oak floor continue throughout the first-floor kitchen, dining room, and primary bedroom, while the upstairs, now an office and guest suite, is differentiated by its darker tones.

A spiral staircase in the living room connects the upper and lower floors; it establishes a sense of scale without overwhelming the owner's collection of art and design items. With minimal visible structure and hardware, the staircase is simultaneously highly crafted and understated, an approach that the architects took throughout the project. "An essential through line in the project was how to work incredibly hard to make it look like we didn't do anything,"

McNeil stated. This effortlessness is also connective: The stairs' 15 treads are treated in a gradient of finishes to transition from the dark, stained floor above to the lighter wood floor below.

The almost-surgical insertions of the architectural renovation allow the owner to display an extensive collection of objects that were previously in storage. Custom exhibition walls are lined with adjustable racks, shelves, and pegs, as an acknowledgement that a space can adapt as an individual's curatorial selections change over time. "We didn't have a mandate to drastically rethink how one lives in an apartment. The [question] was: Can we produce a space where you can live with a collection that evolves over time?" said McNeil. This meant close collaboration with the owner and imbuing the architecture with the same degree of detail and craftsmanship that typifies a great work of art. ●



PREVIOUS SPREAD Niches and shelving host a double-height display of art, objects, and books.

FACING PAGE Curtains soften the bedroom's exposed-slab ceiling.

RIGHT The spare treatment supports a heightened focus on art and furniture.



Simply

Pérez Palacios Arquitectos
Asociados effortlessly elevates
a family getaway in Mexico's
Valle de Bravo.

Text by Sophie Aliece Hollis
Photography by Rafael Gamo



Put



PREVIOUS SPREAD The pool deck was built around existing trees to preserve as much of the site as possible.

LEFT The central axis of the home runs directly from the driveway, through the living room, and into the private spaces via a glassed-in corridor.

BELOW A large slider unites the covered terrace with the kitchen under a single roof. Smoke from the built-in, wood-burning oven stains the plaster wall above.

THE LUSH VEGETATION, mountainous topography, and views surrounding Lake Avándaro make it easy to understand why the Mexican municipality of Valle de Bravo has long been a popular vacation destination. The hospitable climate of the rain forest-like area, located just two hours west of Mexico City, provides serene and scenic respite year-round. When approached by a client looking to build a second home on a remote parcel in the area, Pablo Pérez Palacios, founder of Mexico City-based firm Pérez Palacios Arquitectos Asociados (PPAA), capitalized on these favorable conditions and the area's highly skilled craftspeople to deliver a straightforward yet sophisticated family escape.

The design of the Zarzales residence is simple: A glassed-in passage connects two gabled structures—one hosts private dwelling spaces and the other generous communal areas. “The pitched roof structure looks like a children’s drawing,” Palacios joked, “but we chose this form because it is the best way to deal with the area’s frequent rain.” Site-informed design decisions like this one were a major driver of the project and tie in to PPAA’s ethos of customizing every build to its surroundings: The exposed rafters supporting the steep pitch are forged from local pine; tiles for the roof were selected only after being submerged in water to test which sample looked the best match when wet and dry; the chocolate-colored plaster that clads the exterior was painstakingly mixed on-site after numerous attempts to match the bark of the surrounding tree trunks; and expanses of site-poured concrete that span both indoor and outdoor zones had their aggregate—local stones—exposed throughout the project.

The firm’s holistic approach further manifests in the



**“We never think of architecture
as separate from the interior.”
—Pablo Pérez Palacios**





FACING PAGE The living room fireplace is the sole source of heat for the naturally ventilated home.

RIGHT Built-in features extend to the bathroom where the bathtub and sink appear to emerge from the architecture.



concrete benches, shelves, and kitchen island in the open-plan living and dining space that are defined through careful excavations from the floors and walls. “We never think of architecture as separate from the interior,” Palacios told *AN Interior*. In fact, the design of the Zarzales house attempts to blur the distinction between the two completely via an operable partition that opens the living area directly to a covered terrace overlooking the pool.

It is here that you’ll find a few rare examples of familiar, free-floating furniture—outdoor couches from IKEA, leather loungers from West Elm, and dining chairs from HAY. But perhaps the most memorable item is the expansive, 12-seat wooden dining table, designed in-house by PPAA for

this project. Now available for purchase through the firm’s small product brand, Pur Studio, “Pablo” supports an impressive, 2-inch-thick tabletop and is cut from a single white oak trunk. The same material was used for the kitchen and bathroom cabinetry, also custom-designed for this project by PPAA.

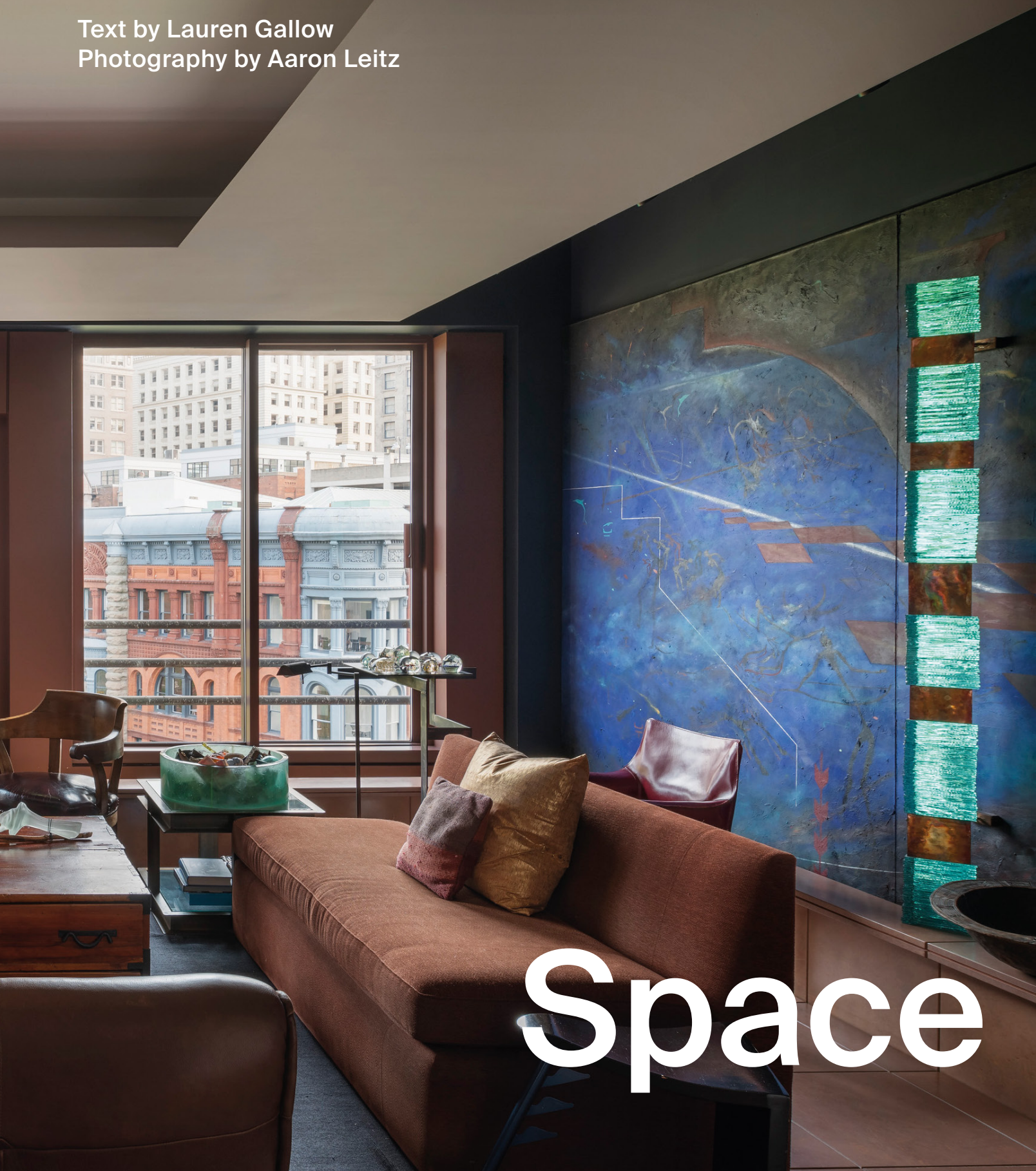
Still, the most impressive feature of the Zarzales residence is its construction cost, which was deceptively low given the home’s elevated charm. By combining a thoughtful implementation of inexpensive materials with a clever cross-ventilation scheme that removed the need for air-conditioning, the home fits in with the luxurious modern mansions in the area, of which there are many. ●

Inner



Jim Olson thoughtfully
expands his downtown
Seattle condominium to
reflect his life and work.

Text by Lauren Gallow
Photography by Aaron Leitz



Space

PREVIOUS SPREAD A two-part mural by artist Jeffrey Bishop, punctuated by sculptures by Nancy Mee, lines the walls of Olson's living room.

BELOW, LEFT Ceiling panels, track lighting, full-height millwork, sand-toned walls, and art contribute to this calm setting.

BELOW, RIGHT The bathroom is designed with accessibility in mind and includes a low-threshold shower area and grab bars.



“I like to make the home
feel like a sacred space.”
—Jim Olson



IN PIONEER SQUARE, Seattle’s oldest neighborhood, a newly enlarged condominium demonstrates that history can be a living organism rather than an artifact frozen in time. After originally designing the penthouse as his personal residence in 1987, architect Jim Olson, founding principal of the firm Olson Kundig, has over the years refined and expanded it, fine-tuning the space as his personal life and that of his wife, Katherine, have ebbed and flowed.

Located blocks from Olson Kundig’s Seattle office, the condo caps a nine-story mixed-use building that Olson designed and developed. Having previously led the development of a mixed-use project in the iconic Pike Place Market in 1978, Olson along with four other local architects initiated this project, called the Olympic Block Building, on what was previously an empty lot, in a bid to bring new life to the neighborhood.

Choosing an inner unit with confined views, Olson envisioned the home as an urban refuge. “At the time, I had started Transcendental Meditation and was fascinated by the notion of clear consciousness,” he explained. The idea of this “inner sanctum” came from the architect’s spiritual practice.

The two-story condo is organized around a central stairwell lit by a sky monitor above. This light core is an architectural expression of “clear consciousness” and one inspired by the artist James Turrell, with whom Olson first collaborated in the early 1980s when the artist completed a site-specific installation in a nearby vacant building. The space is the physical and spiritual heart of the home. “I like to make the home feel like a sacred place,” Olson said. He works to design “moments that take you out of the everyday and into an awareness of beauty.”

While the core has remained intact, over the decades Olson has continually made adjustments to the home. “I’m not the type of architect who goes off on big tangents,” he explained. “I just want to be who I am and keep developing it, refining it, making it perfect.” Changes ranged from minor tweaks—repainting kitchen cabinets with lustrous automotive paint and installing wall-size shutters in the bedroom to block out late-night noise from nearby bars—to more substantial interventions, including an expansion completed last year.

For this, Olson purchased the adjacent unit and added an elevator, a new sitting room, and a bedroom suite, more than doubling the condo’s size to a total of 2,400 square feet. The material expression evolved: The new extension is characterized by natural wood and hints of gold, stainless steel, and bronze, while the original unit is much darker with an integrated living room mural by Jeffrey Bishop in deep blues



FACING PAGE The sitting room can be closed off from the rest of the residence with a large sliding door sheathed in “toasted” stainless steel panels. An artwork by Mexican artist Friedeberg stands along the back wall.

BELOW A stepped ceiling opens a compact bedroom upwards. The Olsons’ art collection can be seen in each room.

and reds. Still, the integration of art and architecture remains a constant.

Olson always initiates the renovations to make the home function better for himself and Katherine. As the couple grow older—Olson is in his early 80s—changes to help them age in place have become paramount. The latest expansion was in response to Katherine’s need for in-home care. In addition to meeting her functional needs, “I wanted her life to have beauty in it,” said Olson.

While Olson’s personal cabin, nestled in the forest of Longbranch, Washington, has become a flash point for his design philosophy, which prioritizes connections to nature and art, his urban residence has rarely been seen. “The cabin is about looking out, to nature and the environment, and this apartment is about looking inwards,” Olson explained. Despite their divergent settings and approaches, both projects evidence Olson’s abiding interest in the architectural palimpsest—the pursuit of meaning through the layering of history in a space over time. ●



Resources

Hairpin House

Artisan
artisan.ba

Stairworks of Boston
stairworksofboston.com

In Collaboration

Afternoon Light
afternoonlight.com

Christopher John Rogers
christopherjohnrogers.com

Emeco
emeco.net

Herman Miller
hermanmiller.com

HAY
hay.com

In Common With
incommonwith.com

Karimoku Furniture
karimoku.com

Matter
mattermatters.com

Orior
oriorfurniture.com

Sophie Lou Jacobsen
sophieloujacobsen.com

UniFor
unifor.it

HOLLY HUNT Los Angeles

HOLLY HUNT
hollyhunt.com

Aesop Yorkville

Aesop
aesop.com

Corian
corian.com

The Middle Half

BluDot
bludot.com

Caesarstone
caesarstoneus.com

Foscarini
foscarini.com

Island Stone
islandstone.com

Kohler
kohler.com

Mockett
mockett.com

Poltrona Frau
poltronafrau.com

Porcelaingres
porcelaingres.com

Room and Board
roomandboard.com

Pacific House

JP Finsbury
jpfinsbury.com.au

Surface Gallery
surfacegallery.com.au

Zarzales Residence

Color Indio
colorindio.com

HAY
hay.com

IKEA
ikea.com

Porcelanosa
porcelanosa-usa.com

Pur
pur-studio.com

West Elm
westelm.com



FLATIRON & NOMAD

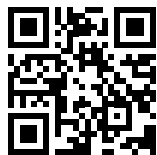
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OCTOBER 13, 2022

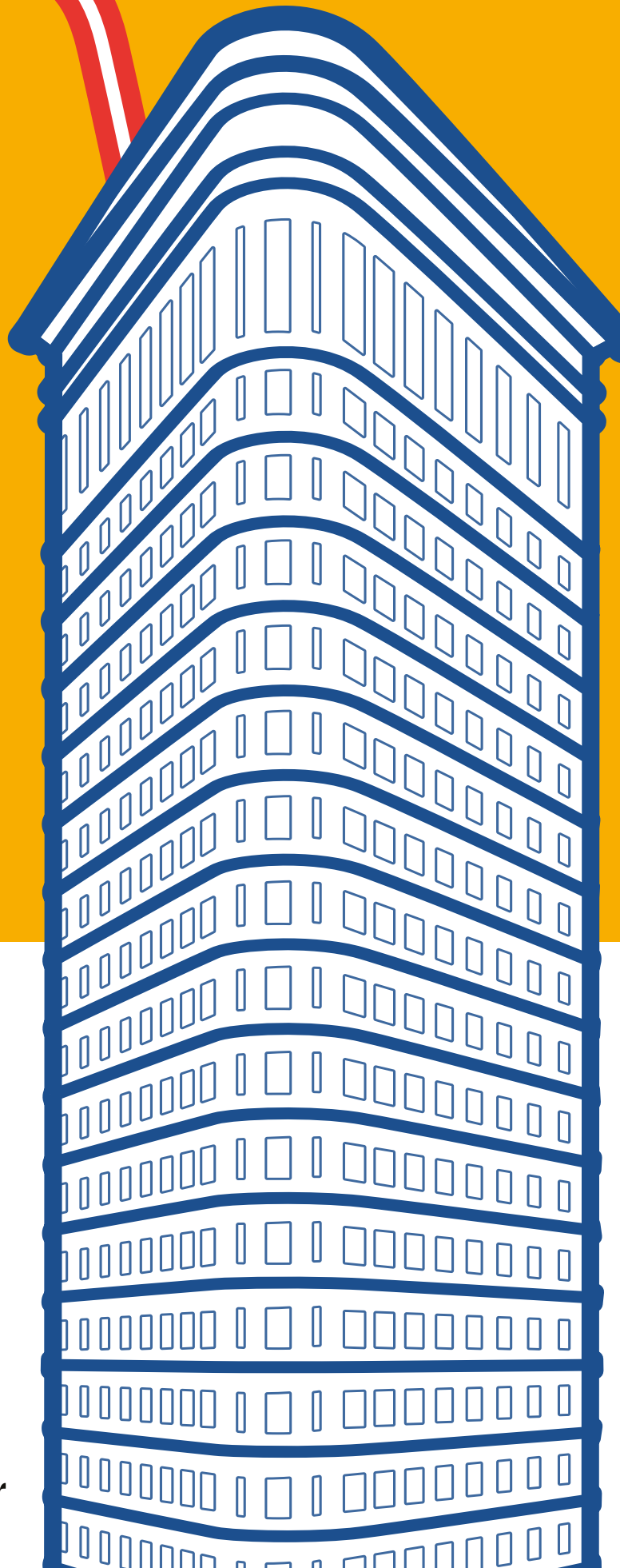
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Over Terra

Unknown Unknowns: An Introduction to Mysteries, the central presentation of the 23rd International Exhibition of the Milan Triennale, deconstructs the Anthropocene.

By Giovanni Comoglio





FACING PAGE The black geodesic sphere of Yuri Suzuki's "Sound of the Earth: Chapter 3" greets visitors at the entrance to the exhibition.

ABOVE A commissioned piece by SOM, realized with multidisciplinary design studio Dotdotdot, explores ten themes related to living in space.

ACROSS GLOSSY MOSAIC floors and past the hall where the exhibits of the 23rd International Exhibition of the Milan Triennale converge and merge, I climb a monumental staircase, leaving behind the 2000s-flavored interior bridge, and arrive at a somehow familiar yet unsettling welcome: a Death Star-ish disco ball with a steel-chain curtain backdrop, a multifaceted suspended solid made of audio speakers that gently moan multiple noises in all directions. I take a step back, pause, and let my inner David Byrne ask, "How did I get here?"

This space has long been a hybrid

realm. It is called the Palazzo dell'Arte, but the institution it hosts does not spring directly from the realm of art. The origins of the Milan Triennale emerge from the interface between technological progress and an increasingly large consumer class—a dialogue between arts, crafts, and mass production similar to the Deutscher Werkbund, that most German of associations from which modern architecture as we know it developed. In its early days, the Triennale simply sought to display the fruits of this industrial production. But in 1964, it took a critical turn when philosopher Umberto

Eco and filmmaker Tinto Brass used the Triennale to analyze the notion of "free" time. Nowadays, international exhibitions and their manifesto-laden main shows have further evolved into big questioning devices, as opposed to design exhibits. Or rather, they are now tools for design insofar as they manage to redefine its questions, to open its scope a little.

The central exhibit of this year's Triennale, *Unknown Unknowns: An Introduction to Mysteries*, explores the difficult question of what we don't know we don't know, in an attempt to break us out

of our human- and earth-centric ways of thinking and designing. Notably, the show is curated by an astrophysicist, Ersilia Vaudo, the chief diversity officer at the European Space Agency. “*Unknown Unknowns* focuses, through an intense dialogue between art, design, and science, on the need to move beyond an anthropocentric outlook, be it terrestrial or cosmic,” Vaudo told *AN Interior*. “To what extent is the presumption of anthropocentrism tied to claiming awareness as exclusive to us humans? The cosmic perspective is clear. We are granted no unique stature, much less a central role. In the words of the astrophysicist, writer, and poet Michel Cassé: ‘Science is a lengthy struggle against geocentrism and anthropocentrism, a gradual decentralization that causes some narcissistic pain, while others experience it as liberation and ecstasy.’”

Some of the exhibited works directly address the fact that humans are not the only designers on the planet: We are treated to Humboldt and Bonpland’s equinoctial plant geographies, which recall today’s nonhuman ethnographies; the holobiont that connects the universe with a bacterium in the digestive system; the architectures of bees and ants; the maps of terra forma that embrace a nonlinear time and disclose the possibility of another world; and a visualization of the imminent and inevitable merging of the Milky Way and Andromeda galaxies, which will happen sometime in the next four to five billion years in “a boundless, empty space admitting no sound.”

Other works trigger a more dialectical dimension. While BIG’s architecture for Mars echoes something Earth-based, right across the room is a display of research by SOM that explores the possibilities of an extraterrestrial architecture based on nonterrestrial conditions that have until recently been categorized as hostile. Meanwhile, Bruce Nauman’s *Failing to*

Levitate in the Studio (1966) humorously reminds us that gravity is inescapable, while Julijonas Urbonas, in *When Accelerators Turn into Sweaters* (2021), shows us that sweaters knitted from superconductive fibers, when anchored above a magnet, can in fact levitate.

A dialectic is the perspective through which the cyborg universe has been addressed as well. We are treated to the amplification of human faculties into “superpowers” of perception through

magnetoreception mindware and the possible development of new human cells in a bioreactor. This latter theme is memorably rendered in Amy Karle’s *Regenerative Reliquary* (2016), a scaffold in the shape of a human hand that is 3D-printed in hydrogel that disintegrates over time; it is meant to be seeded with human stem cells and grow into actual tissue and bone.

There is also a section dedicated to mathematics—“the possible ... gateway to access what we do not know.” We are shown



ABOVE Five neon sculptures by Andrea Galvani are illuminated from hand-blown Murano glass. The artworks were generated in collaboration with researchers from the Max Planck Institute for Physics in Munich and La Sapienza Università di Roma.



ABOVE The staging for the exhibition was designed by Space Caviar and created by Wasp. The pieces were 3D printed on-site using organic materials largely sourced from the food industry.

research, models, and fog chambers that intercept and make visible the passage of cosmic radiation. Tomás Saraceno's *Particular Matter(s)* (2022) has also been adapted for the Triennale, where the illusory nature, quantity, and movement of particles suspended in our atmosphere are made knowable by the exactness of a net and the beam of light that intercepts it.

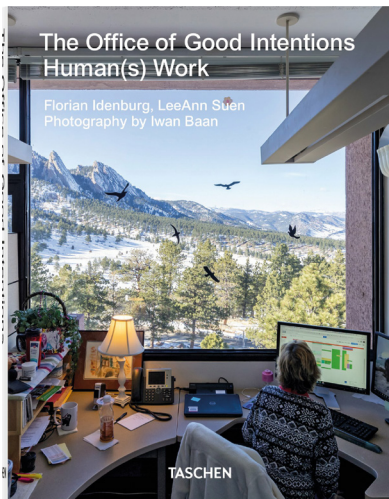
After visitors complete this loop through the unknown and reemerge into the hall, the Death Star-ish disco ball

appears again, its role finally clarified. The installation by Yuri Suzuki, *Sound of the Earth: Chapter 3* (2022), plays noises from around the world that have been submitted via a website (soundoftheearth.org). Stimulated by so many inputs, I'm overwhelmed by how noncentral and non-almighty (although quite harmful) human beings seem to be. Consequently, I also see how non-alone in a universal process of constant design and redesign we are. We stand listening, ready to see how far these thoughts can take us. ●

The Myth of the Perfect Office

A new book by Florian Idenburg and LeeAnn Suen studies workplaces since the 1960s.

By Matthew Allen



THE OFFICE is one of those spatial types that offer perennially productive problems for designers. *The Office of Good Intentions. Human(s) Work* says it all in its title: Drawing attention to “good intentions” is necessary only when they don’t come to fruition. Although the book, written by Florian Idenburg and LeeAnn Suen, sets its primal scene in the 1960s, the office’s problem is as old as the office itself. The word *bureaucrat* was coined following the French Revolution to identify the regressive forces that were supposedly holding society back from its true potential, an impression captured by Franz Kafka in his novel *The Castle*. (The author also worked as a law clerk.) Since then, the office has been synonymous with alienated labor of the white-collar variety. Wisely, the authors of *The Office of Good Intentions* do not purport to offer a solution to our collective office woes. Instead, Idenburg and Suen have put together an expansive survey of attempts to bring technology, space, and social organization into harmonious alignment, with varying degrees of more-or-less short-lived

success. The volume begins by recalling the dream of human-machine symbiosis (read: office worker and computer)—a fantasy that many, like MIT researcher Joseph Licklider (the subject of the book’s opening episode), expected would be realized around, say, 1970. It becomes clear in the following pages that technology intensifies the office problem at least as frequently as it furnishes solutions. Licklider was involved in the development of ARPANET, the precursor to the internet, which has become the one nefarious technology that now rules them all. Prefiguring this development, Stanford researcher Douglas Engelbart delivered “the mother of all technology demonstrations” in 1968, showcasing how interconnected devices could facilitate collaborative remote work and teleconferencing. We have seen how this story unfolds during our pandemic years of experimentation with remote work: It’s sometimes a relaxed and streamlined work session at the beach, but more often, it’s surveillance software virtually chaining workers to desks in makeshift—and oxymoronic—home offices.

A central theme of Idenburg and Suen's book is the recurring attempts to make offices paperless. The first case study focuses on the evolution of advertising guru Jay Chiat's "vision of a workplace for digital nomads." It begins with Frank Gehry's iconic Chiat\Day headquarters (1991) in Venice, California, where workers enter beneath a giant pair of binoculars (designed by Claes Oldenburg) into a freewheeling "carnival of charisma," which the authors astutely link to painter Robert Rauschenberg's *Combine* series. At the company's New York office, designed in 1994 by Gaetano Pesce, employees were required to find a new workplace every day after checking out a fresh laptop through a window surrounded by alluring red lips. It didn't work out: "In New York, employees simply stopped coming into the office,

or else camped out in walled conference rooms," readers learn. "In Los Angeles, workers used the trunks of their cars as filing cabinets and stopped returning their portable phones and PowerBooks." After a 1995 merger with TBWA Worldwide to create TBWA\Chiat\Day, the firm's newest office, designed by Clive Wilkinson Architects in 1998, dropped the earlier fun-house atmosphere in favor of office urbanism, complete with streets, neighborhoods, and buildings in the idiom of stacked shipping containers inside a giant warehouse-like space. The case study is rounded out by comments on Google and Facebook offices, which embrace the freewheeling aesthetics that Chiat\Day pioneered. If there is a lesson to be learned, it is that paperwork is part of the DNA of the office.

Max Weber said as much in his sociology of bureaucracy a century ago. To paraphrase: Bureaucracy is when workers in an office use equipment to shuffle paperwork. Chapters in *The Office of Good Intentions* alternate between wide-ranging interpretive essays and detailed case studies presented mostly through photographs, with a few other odd bits (like studies of furniture and "smart" devices) sprinkled throughout. Iwan Baan's photography strikes a beautiful balance between showcasing the messiness of inhabitation and a sense of spatial design. This is especially interesting in the cases of classic offices that now house new companies, as with the aspiring chefs on a floor of Kevin Roche John Dinkeloo and Associates' College Life Insurance Company Headquarters. Other highlights include

FACING PAGE The book includes extensive contemporary photography of famous workplaces by Iwan Baan.

BELOW An office interior at the Salk Institute in La Jolla, California, designed by Louis Kahn.



Iwan Baan



ABOVE Dogs are welcome at the TBWA\Chiat\Day offices completed in 1998 by Clive Wilkinson Architects.

Arcosanti (Paolo Soleri), Weyerhaeuser Headquarters (SOM), and IBM Boca Raton (Marcel Breuer). Unlike more “architectural” studies of the office like Jeannette Kuo’s *A-Typical Plan*, the book does not include floorplans or other drawings, so it is difficult to compare post-occupancy conditions with the designers’ intentions. Overall, the book comes across less as a typological study than a theoretical text plus mood board. This may be a reflection of the contemporary ethos of office design, in which designers need to accommodate office reformers and their technological panaceas while mitigating unintended consequences.

The focus on flexibility is no surprise given Idenburg’s background. He and Jing Liu founded the New York-based firm SO-IL after working together in the office of SANAA, a firm known for open plans sparsely populated with groups of furniture. A case study of a SO-IL-designed production studio is the most minimal in the volume, with its palette of whites and grays, variably translucent or

reflective. Suen, the book’s coauthor, earned an MArch at the Harvard Graduate School of Design and is an architect in Boston. We should expect any book about offices in 2022 to be colored by a dystopian tinge, and *The Office of Good Intentions* delivers that in a closing section of speculative fiction in the vein of William Gibson’s *Neuromancer*, which offers critique by way of plausible futuristic example. Not that the main text shies away from critique: There is, for example, a passage comparing neoliberal “contract positions repackaged as ‘alternative employment arrangements’” with the Kelly Girl, “on-demand workers [who] were hired as temporary supplements to full-time, predominantly male, staff.” (These “brand-name office call girls” were introduced in 1946 by William Russell Kelly, whose successor company remembers him as “the founder of the modern temporary help industry.”) Sometimes reality is stranger than fiction.

The problem of the office is likely too big to be “just” a design concern.

The question that may prompt a reader to pick up this book (“How can I design a better workspace?”) quickly transforms into something much broader: “How can we design work?” Then, the query finally becomes “How can our society be better?” Utopian projects referred to throughout the book, like Constant’s *New Babylon* (1956–74), demonstrate the ingredients of the problem have been understood for some time: automation, abundance, freedom of choice regarding employment and location, and the drive for self-fulfillment. Still, why isn’t work better? *The Office of Good Intentions* assembles the relevant puzzle pieces for an answer to this question without snapping them into place.

As for the larger question of how fulfilling work can fit within an improved social reality, real answers would follow Idenburg and Suen’s lead by burying the dream of liberation from paperwork and the myth of perpetual play, as both hazes mask ever more creative forms of exploitation. ●

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Party Line

A quiet installation of loud objects at SFMOMA sets the scene for discussion and discovery.

By Jack Murphy

BELOW Jay Sae Jung "Oh, Savage" series armchair, 2020; collection SFMOMA, Accessions Committee Fund purchase; © Jay Sae Jung Oh; image courtesy of the artist and Salon 94 Design.



THE SIXTH FLOOR of SFMOMA's vertical campus in downtown San Francisco's SoMa neighborhood is the ideal context for *Conversation Pieces: Contemporary Furniture in Dialogue*, an exhibition on view until June 25, 2023. Architecturally, Mario Botta's Ticinese stepped-brick hulk is balanced in back by Snøhetta's taller, fog-inspired addition. Both possess strong personalities (building-alities?) that are strengthened through dialectical pairing.

Similarly, the show, curated by Jennifer Dunlop Fletcher, SFMOMA's Helen Hilton Raiser Curator of Architecture and Design, features over 40 strong chairs and light fixtures. (All were selected from the museum's collection.) The point is to mingle eye-catching "conversation starters" and see what happens when their aesthetic collisions are appreciated altogether.

Inevitably, pieces by architects are featured, including an intense Memphis-patterned chaise from Nathalie du Pasquier, a "seaweed" seat by Gaetano Pesce, a sober bench from Studio Mumbai's Bijoy Jain, a fluffy all-black work by Ania Jaworska, and a symbolic comb-chair from Germane Barnes, titled *Uneasy Lies the Head that Wears the Crown*, from 2020. Other veritable bangers are supplied by creatives like Maarten Baas, Martino Gamper, Dozie Kanu, Rei Kawakubo, Shiro Kuramata, Max Lamb, and Isamu Noguchi, among others.

But rather than a mishmash of clashing, the setting, assisted by Los

20TH ANNUAL WEEKEND

OHNY.ORG





ABOVE Nathalie du Pasquier,
"Royal Chaise," 1983; collection
SFMOMA, gift of Miranda Leonard;
© Nathalie du Pasquier.

BELOW "Conversation Pieces"
(installation view, SFMOMA)



Top: Katherine Du Tiel; Bottom: Matthew Millman

Angeles-based creative director and interior designer Alexandra Loew, is fluid and calm. Crimson carpet lines the gallery's floors and walls, and the pieces are staged in "islands" delineated by flowy white blobs. The lights are dimmed, and books are stacked at the perimeter, suggesting a more domestic space. Benches are provided for viewers to sit, observe, linger.

In the room, speakers play spoken exchanges between designers Stephen Burks, Kanu, Fernando Laposse, Jay Sae Jung Oh, Liliana Ovalle, and Bethan Laura Wood; these discussions informed the installation. (Transcripts are available via QR code for the hearing-impaired.) The point is not an authoritative display of design history but a moody atmosphere of intrigue that defines the best dinner parties. ●

CERAMICS OF ITALY TILE COMPETITION



*Residential Winner, 2018 – Ziger/Sned Architects
Photographer – Jennifer Hughes & Adam House*




30TH ANNIVERSARY

Ceramics of Italy is now accepting entries for the 2023 Tile Competition. Organized by Confindustria Ceramica (the Italian Association of Ceramics) and the Italian Trade Agency, the competition recognizes the exceptional work of North American architects, designers and students who use Italian ceramic and porcelain tile in their projects. Winners will receive a 5-day CEU trip to Bologna, Italy for Cersaie and the opportunity to present their project at Coverings '23, Orlando.

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